Of Tennis Courts and Fireplaces: Neurath's Internment on the Isle of Man and his Politics of Design[1]

[uncorrected draft – please refer to published version]

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ABSTRACT

Otto Neurath's version of functionalism is one that begins with people "as we find them," a proposition first set out in his 1917 essay "The Converse Taylor System." Any attempt to redesign the existing furnishings of everyday life must take into account "functions" that go beyond the obvious purpose of objects: functions that are to do with sociability, happiness, familiarity, the love of "coziness," and that address the diversity and contradictoriness of people. This essay considers how Neurath applied and made use of these ideas about design in 1940s Britain, during and after his internment on the Isle of Man between 1940–1941 and in talks, papers and correspondence from this period. It does not focus on the Isotype Institute, which would usually be considered his principal intervention in design, but on his commentary on everyday objects and practices. In particular it centres on four items – tennis courts, fireplaces, chairs and shoes – and through these elaborates some of the connections between Neurath's ideas about the design of everyday life, and the significance of everyday practices, and his logical empiricism.

Introduction

During the early 1920s, as part of his work in the *Österreichischer Verband für Siedlungs- und Kleingartenwesen* (Settlement and Allotment Garden Association), and then through his work in the *Gesellschafts-und Wirtschaftsmuseum* (Social and Economic Museum) in Vienna, Otto Neurath had developed strong views about design as it pertained to everyday life. His views regarding functionalism in design, and regarding the social importance of design, were strongly influenced by his close friend, the architect and textile designer Josef

[1] This essay is partly based in AHRC-funded archival research in Otto Neurath's correspondence and papers during 2007–2009, and later research at the Manx Museum in Douglas, a visit to the siteof the Onchan internment camp and discussion with friends and relatives of internees in nearby camps, as well as secondary reading. I am grateful to the AHRC, Eric Kindel at the Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection (Department of Typography and Graphic Design, University of Reading), to Ádam Tuboly and Jordi Cat, and to Sabrina Rahman for all their help. This essay began life as a paper at *Politics, Democratic Education and Empowerment: The Case of Otto Neurath (1992–1945)* Universität Wien/Institute Vienna Circle Symposium, 28 May 2015, and I am grateful to Günther Sandner, Chris Burke, Elisabeth Nemeth, Friedrich Stadler as well as the other participants in the symposium.

Frank. With Frank, he oversaw the development of the innovative housing estate, the *Werkbundsiedlung*, which opened on the outskirts of Vienna in 1932 (Rahman 2014, 22; Hochhäusl in this volume).

Frank's practice stood in stark contrast to the functionalist aesthetic of the *neue Sachlichkeit* and the Bauhaus. His houses built for the 1927 German Werkbund exhibition ("*Die Wohnung*") in Stuttgart, had been criticised on the grounds that his work was too decorative: critics described the interiors as "femininely appointed", filled with "frippery", like a "bordello" (cited in Long 2002, 108; Galison 1990, 723). Frank responded by arguing that an empty and affected "functionalism" did not address psychological needs for comfort, cosiness, and liveability. He also argued that the fashion for bare furnishings was more oriented toward intellectuals than to the working classes: "The demand for bareness is made particularly by those who think continuously, or at least need to be able to do so, and who can obtain comfort and rest by other means" (cited in Blau 1999 , 196; Frank 1927).

In his own work, Neurath recognized the importance of everyday household objects and architecture in making possible certain ways of living, allowing a tolerable and viable way of life. However, like his friend, he was a strong critic of the ideas of shaping a way of life that were held by some modernist designers (of the *neue Sachlichkeit* and the Bauhaus) and the concepts of function and causality these implied. Together with Frank, he took the view that functionalism in design was actually a specific aesthetic style, and that there was no such thing as a true or complete functionalism, since that would require knowing in advance the full range of uses to which a designed object might be put.

Neurath's version of functionalism is one that begins with people "as we find them", a proposition first set out in his 1917 essay "The Converse Taylor System" (1917/1973). Any attempt to redesign the existing furnishings of everyday life must take into account "functions" that go beyond the obvious purpose of objects: functions that are to do with sociability, happiness, familiarity, the love of "coziness", and that address the diversity and contradictoriness of people. This essay considers how Neurath applied and made use of these ideas about design in 1940s Britain, during and after his internment on the Isle of Man between 1940-1941 and in talks, papers and correspondence from this period. It does not focus on the Isotype institute, which would usually be considered his principal intervention in design, but on his commentary on everyday objects and practices. In particular I shall focus on four items – tennis courts, fireplaces, chairs and shoes – and through these elaborate some of the connections between Neurath's ideas about the design of everyday life, and the significance of everyday practices, and his logical empiricism.

XY. 2. Internment and the Tennis Court

Details of Otto Neurath and Marie Reidemeister's arrival in Britain and their internment on the Isle of Man are given in Ádám Tamas Tuboly's chapter in this volume, "United by Action: Neurath in England". Here, I will give additional background to contextualize my discussion of how Neurath's ideas about design and everyday life both shaped and were shaped by his experience of internment. This background will help to elucidate a lecture given by Neurath while he was interned.

The Isle of Man is not part of the United Kingdom but is classed as a "self-governing British Crown dependency". One of its principle trades in the 1930s was tourism. In 1939-40, the holiday trade on the Isle of Man was severely affected by the War, and the Manx Chamber of Trade suggested the island as a site for Internment camps as it was in the First World War. These had been camps for civilians who were mostly German nationals living in Britain. However, this time, the home secretary decided not to build camps in the countryside but to requisition the large, terraced Victorian boarding houses, which were central to the bed and breakfast trade on the island. The decision did not please the Manx landladies, who had to vacate their houses very quickly at the end of May 1940. But it was designed to placate the press and the public, coinciding with a growing media panic about spies and "fifth columnists". Second World War Internment on the Isle of Man began in late 1939 and early 1940.

When Neurath and Marie arrived in England on 15th May 1940, the numbers of refugees arriving from Europe each day was increasing. The internment program expanded to take in men and women who had lived in Britain for years, together with the newly arrived refugees from Europe, most of whom were Jewish. Neurath, who at fifty seven was one of the oldest internees (the cut-off age was sixty), was held in Onchan camp, in the north of Douglas bay on the Isle of Man, along with around 1200-1300 German-speaking men. The camp was made up of four streets in Onchan, surrounded by double fences of barbed wire, and consisted of around 56 to 60 large furnished houses, many with nine bedrooms or more. With two or three men to a bedroom, Onchan camp was still less overcrowded than other camps on the island.

The internment program was indiscriminate and conditions uncomfortable. In the beginning, Nazi sympathizers were sometimes housed with Jews. Some would have arrived without full identification papers, and could be using false names. This made it very difficult to know who to trust among the other prisoners. Neurath, to my knowledge, did not commit

much description of the camp to writing, but from other refugee accounts, we know that the emotional impact of internment was very varied. For some prisoners, particularly those who had already experienced the Nazi concentration camps, it was traumatic. For Jews and known opponents of Nazism there was another danger: in 1940, no-one could know the outcome of the war, and the internees had no access to news and communications, but they realized that should Germany take Britain, they would have no escape. Some felt that they were effectively "sitting ducks". Moreover, winter was brutally cold on the Isle of Man, with only Victorian fireplaces for heating.

Nevertheless, in his history of the Isle of Man internment camps in World War two, *Island of Barbed Wire*, Connery Chappell (1984, 40) suggests that the size of the houses, the beautiful sea views from the headland and the presence of football pitches and tennis courts meant that "Onchan Camp could reasonably have been regarded as the 'best' male internment camp on the island." Local residents generally had no contact with the interned men but would see them accompanied by soldiers, going down to the sea, to go swimming. The camp included recreation facilities because a social club or holiday camp was a part of the requisitioned area.[2] At first there was a ban on communications but radios were allowed after a while and the men produced their own newspaper – the *Onchan Pioneer*. A Popular University was founded and between May 1940 and February 1941, 496 lectures were held.

According to *The Onchan Pioneer* it was Neurath's lecture, given in January 1941, that held the record of the highest attendance for an indoor lecture. Two hundred and fifty men came to hear him give a talk cryptically titled (according to the *Pioneer*), "How do you make the tennis court so durable?". This title can be read very literally as meaning "Why is the tennis court hard?". That is, why have a tarmacked tennis court (such as the one in Onchan camp) rather than a grass court? However, Neurath's equally cryptic notes for this paper are in the Vienna Circle Institute Archive, with the title "Wie Machen Sie's nur dass der Tennis-Rasen so Dauerhaft ist", perhaps better translated as "How Does the Tennis Court Endure?"[3] The notes are in German and it is likely that the lecture was given in German, but unfortunately they do not give a clear sense of the full content, since they are little more than a list of prompts. Neurath subtitled it "A social-critical reflection", and we can see in the list some hints of the ideas that would continue to preoccupy him over the next five years.

[2] It was called The Royal Avenue Social Club. See Onchan District Commissioners Flickr site: https://www.flickr.com/photos/88093414@N03/9520895627/

[3] "Tennis Rasen. 6. Jan. 1941. Otto Neurath Nachlass, Wiener Kreis Stichtung, Noord-Hollands Archief, 206/K. 82. Thanks to Sabrina Rahman for help with the translation of these notes.

One prompt listed in the lecture notes is the phrase: “Wo ist das Pferd?” (“Where is the horse?”). This peculiar question makes more sense in the context of Neurath’s notes for a later lecture, given after his release from internment, at Bedford College, Cambridge, on the 9th of November 1941. There, Neurath described how in the early 19th century in some countries members of the ruling classes wore tailcoats and high boots, clothes that were originally associated with horse riding, but now worn when not riding. His point was that the fashion signified a kind of modern status, because of the direct connection with horse riding, but he cautioned that not all customs could be read in this way: fashion loses its connection with function, but the function does not necessarily become a residual, subliminal or “subconscious” purpose or meaning (see Neurath 1942/1973).

This is part of a larger argument where he sets out his philosophy of logical empiricism and argues against thinking in terms of cause and effect or attempting to deduce too much, a tendency Neurath had long associated with what he termed “pseudo-rationalism”. But it is also a critique of idealist theories of culture which tried to establish a connection between the will, spirit or mentality of an age or a generation, and its artistic or aesthetic manifestations, understood in terms of “style”. Neurath’s antipathy to such theories of national character and *Geist* was set out early in his 1921 essay “Anti-Spengler”. This attack on Oswald Spengler’s influential *Decline of the West* emphasized Spengler’s pseudo-rationalism – “through method and proof he wants to compel our approval” – in what is, Neurath (1921/1973 , 160) argued, essentially a work of speculative prophecy. In particular, Neurath saw Spengler’s popularity as dangerous because of his insistence on “proofs” of decline, his confusion of history and biology, his treatment of culture as independent of social and environmental context or conditions.

It is against the influence of such accounts that Neurath attempted to set out other ways of describing and accounting for cultural difference. Indeed, the tennis court lecture notes reveal evidence of interest in questions of national difference, and in the possible role of German philosophical tendencies in the success of Nazism. There are mentions of traditions and taboos, of co-existence and tolerance of different aspirations and ways of life: all themes that will preoccupy his later writing in Britain. The notes end with mention of happiness and then, at the end, the words “Tennis-Rasen”– tennis court.

3. The English Fireplace

It is clear from his notes that Neurath meant “enduring” rather than durable, which has a subtly different meaning. If we ask the question “how do you make the tennis court endure?”

we suddenly seem to be on more familiar Neurath territory and we can begin to imagine a possible lecture. Why, for instance, keep a tennis court in a prison? How to keep playing in such a situation? What is the importance of play, of pleasure?[4] What if the question about the tennis court is actually about how to preserve joy, against the odds?

Play mattered for Neurath. Above all, he valued human happiness and in his writings had frequently suggested that it ought to be the basis and the starting point for planning (town planning, and social and economic planning more broadly).[5] Later he would be misrepresented by Friedrich Hayek, author of the influential *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), as an apologist for planning as enforced social conformism and social engineering. Yet Neurath's understanding of planning and of design could not be further from this. His view was that planning done well would enable the individual freedom and non-conformism necessary for happiness. On Hayek he wrote,

> Professor von Hayek thinks of planning exclusively as something dictatorial. I do not know why… planning can be connected with a suppression of individuals hardly heard before, but also to enable us to be free to an extent hardly heard before, 'free' i.e. a multiplicity of ways of life possible, non-conformism supported by planned institutions. (Neurath 1945, "Physicalism, Planning and the Social Sciences: Bricks Prepared for a Discussion v. Hayek, 26 July 1945.")[6]

It seems likely that the tennis court played a similar role as the "English fireplace" did in Neurath's thought. The latter comes up several times in Neurath's notes and effects after internment. It is mentioned in his 1941 lecture at Bedford College Cambridge on logical empiricism. It comes up again in his 1942 essay "International Planning for Freedom". It also appears in notes for a talk, not by Neurath, but by Henry N. Winter titled "The Englishman Abroad" which is among Neurath's papers in the Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection at the University of Reading.

In these writings the fireplace example serves a dual purpose. First, it seems to represent the importance of pleasure and human happiness as against the tendency of social

[4] I don't know if the courts were used. I do know of one game – called Witness – played by Imre Goth and other internees in a different male camp several streets away. A good friend of his, the artist Marcia Farquhar reports: "The game involved an elected group staging an incident with all sorts of details to be recalled, or not, by the rest of the group watching. Even though the audience group were looking to remember there was a high instance of contradictory / fabricated memories. Imre only told me of this game in relation to the unreliability of witnesses". (Farquhar, Marcia (2015), Email to Michelle Henning, 6th May).

[5] Neurath's Epicurean understanding of happiness is discussed in several texts including: Sandner (2007), O'Neill (2008), Cartwright, Cat, Fleck, and Uebel (1996), Stuchlik (2011).

[6] As John O'Neill (2006, 2) says, Neurath was "a central target "of Hayek's papers "The Counter-Revolution of Science" and "Scientism and the Study of Society" published between 1941 and 1944. Hayek misrepresents Neurath as more concerned with scientific measures and centralisation than he actually was.

planners and designers to emphasize efficiency and function. For example, in the Cambridge lecture, Neurath contrasted the German use of the fire with the British. In Germany, he suggested, a fire is "a tool for making warm", but in Britain it also has a social function, "centralising, grouping people, ... giving an opportunity to be together. Therefore changing the fireplace institution means changing many things: we cannot say what. It is very difficult for a sociologist to find out what things are related with that" (Neurath 1941).[7]

Grouping and gathering around the fire had been a necessity in the Onchan camp. In the Manx museum in Douglas, one painting made by an internee shows large groups of internees around the fireplace during the bitter winter nights. The museum also includes a Manx fireplace, which in the traditional Isle of Man cottages would typically take up an entire wall and incorporated seating and ovens. But the fireplaces of the Onchan boarding houses are more conventionally Victorian in design, similar to suburban houses built throughout Britain in the late nineteenth-century. These large houses would have had fireplaces in bedrooms, as well as in the main living room, but availability of coal may well have limited fires to the main room, forcing the men to cluster together around the fire.

In his 1941 lecture, Neurath made the point that, if to German and Austrian eyes, the English fireplace is a "waste of calories" (since eighty percent of the heat goes up the chimney), we might say the same about skiing. He argued that what one person views in terms of efficiency, calories and waste, another calls pleasure. His discussion of the fireplace is a riposte to those functionalists in design who have a limited notion of function, and a means of showing that planning is more difficult than it might seem, since the impact of a fireplace is not quantifiable. He had made this argument in an earlier article "Inventory of the Standard of Living" where he recognized that "the usual standard of living research, though very useful, does not tell the whole story of human happiness" (Neurath, 1937/2004, 517). The things that go toward our happiness are of different orders, as he wrote in 1942: "We can speak about trebling the mortality rate, but perhaps not about trebling the beauty of an ocean view" (Neurath, 1937/2004, 517).

Even as early as 1912, Neurath had argued against the attempts to measure pleasure made by the Austrian School of economists and the Utilitarians. In a lecture entitled "The Problem of the Pleasure Maximum", he set out to demonstrate the impossibility of such calculations since, as Jordi Cat (2014) explains "cardinal measures for comparative utility, or pleasure values, could not be determined for the same individual, much less for different

[7] This is connected to his idea of unpredictability in principle, which he considered to be one of his most important contribution to the philosophy of science. See his Encyclopedia monograph, Neurath 1944, sect. 12.)

individuals" (cf. Neurath, 1912/1973, 118-119).[8] In "Inventory of the Standard of Living", he developed this critique further, the dominant approach in economics as an "atomistic, utilitarian approach" in which human feelings appear only as the pleasures and pains correlated with 'commodities' and 'discommodities' (Neurath, 1937/2004, 513-526). Neurath argued that a sense of well-being is not the aggregate of various pleasures and pains, and therefore cannot be measured according to a pleasure calculus.[9]

The point about the function of the fireplace being more than simply "making warm" comes up again in this 1942 essay, where he makes the point that fireplaces are not "happiness neutral":

> Let us take an uncontroversial example. Assume the scientists tell the English people that their fireplaces waste calories – of course they do so enormously, But the fireplaces as an element of our environment are not "happiness-neutral" as it were, as is e.g., the cable shaft below the surface of the street. The fireplaces are related to homely comfort and to many customs of our private life. (Neurath 1942/1873, 427.)

The second purpose of the fireplace example is as a means for Neurath to distance himself from any straightforward idea that design can produce or cause, certain forms of sociability. It should be clear that Neurath was not claiming that the fireplace contributed to an English immunity to Nazi or Fascist government, although at times in his writing he seems to be implying this. Rather, he uses it as an example to warn against deducing too much from phenomena. Design carries a great responsibility but its consequences cannot be determined in advance: as he says in the Cambridge lecture, "changing the fireplace institution means changing many things; we cannot say what. It is very difficult for sociologist to find out what things are related with that" (Neurath 1941).

To deduce too much, Neurath argued, is dangerous: "relations are always interesting, but all relations are so to speak without direction. If you give a relation a direction you are adding more. That is dangerous" (ibid.). He began his Cambridge lecture with a discussion of the development of logical empiricism out of the opposition between an over-systematizing "rationalistic attitude" and an empiricism that focused on scattered detail with no coherence. Logical empiricism, Neurath (1941) argued, is not an attempt to build a totalizing system, but a reflective approach, "an attempt to analyse more carefully than before the terms and

[8] See also Uebel 2004, Introduction, and in this volume.
[9] Neurath used the term "Lebensstimmung" which has been variously translated as "states of felicity" or "quality of life" but which could mean "sense of well-being" or, more clumsily "life-feeling".

expressions used in arguing". This means avoiding certain terminology and statements which assume more definite knowledge than can possibly be known, and accepting the provisional nature of decisions and solutions (ibid.).[10] In everyday life we have to make decisions and find solutions all the time, and this understandably leads to "a tendency to overstate the possibility of unambiguous judgments". He also took the fireplace example further to show one of the main difficulties of planning: this uncertainty is connected with the recognition of the impossibility of knowing the world in its entirety, and the importance of assembling diverse perspectives (and biographies of objects and people) rather than trying to impose an overarching view.[11]

"International Planning for Freedom" is an explicit call for social planning – for the need to "consciously cultivate the future and the possible" (Neurath 1919/1973, 155). But the fireplace serves as a warning about how nuanced and complex this is, and a reminder of how pleasure as well as efficiency must take a central role. What makes people happy is very hard to anticipate since "[a]ll homely comfort relate to certain traditional customs and environments and that joy sometimes might depend solely on the fact that something should *not* be changed […]. How much 'discomfort' is liked because it is 'ours'. And yet other people like changes and adventure" (Neurath 1942/1973, 423, emphasis in the original).

Neurath did not specify which of his German friends had been so damning about the wasteful English fireplace. But we can look at commentary from the period to see that the fireplace is under fire, so to speak. William Gaunt (1934, 605), for example, writing in the *Journal of the Royal Society of the Arts* in 1934, argued "we no longer have any need for a huge black cave in the room in which a fire burns" and "round which a shivering family crouch" on the grounds that the wireless now provided an alternate focus (similar arguments have been made about the television). In 1942, in the same journal, R. Fitzmaurice (1942, 501), anticipating the postwar rebuilding of Britain emphasized that the key factors in the

[10] It means avoiding, for example, the language of cause and effect, in which we deduce one thing from another. Neurath gave an entertaining list of the kinds of accounts this would disallow: such as Max Weber's account of Protestantism as "more or less causing, producing a situation in which capitalistic life can grow"; accounts of the "concealed intentions" revealed in styles of dress or customs; accounts of the origins of a torturer in his childhood experiences; or William James' argument about war as a necessary outlet for destructive tendencies in humanity (in "The Moral Equivalent of War", 1906) and similar arguments regarding film. Whether film produces aggression or acts as an outlet is a debate on which Neurath has "not the slightest hypothesis" – instead his aim is to point to the problem of the kind of definite assertions such speculations lead to – "if you are reading as a boy such things then the results are…" (Neurath 1941). On Neurath and films, see Jordi Cat and Benjamin Alford, *Drawing Neurath and Polanyi Together and Apart: the Social, Scientific and Cinematographic Projects and Cultures that Animated Their Diagrams.* (forthcoming).

[11] Using "more or less" Einstein's concept of world lines (roughly speaking: the biography of an object or person told according to co-ordinates in space and time) Neurath (1941) argues "the most important point is that you have not so to speak a given whole" but a great number of biographies.

design of heating systems were the economy and efficiency of fuel but that this was blocked in Britain by "a violent prejudice" in favor of the "open domestic grate". In other words, Neurath's example of the fire was not simply plucked from the air or even from experience, but came from a recognition that heating systems were a key part of the debates in Britain surrounding postwar planning.

4. (In)tolerance and Diversity

Of the three mentions of the English fireplace I cited above, the third is in a talk given by a correspondent of Neurath's called Henry N. Winter, later the author of a book called *Fluency in German*. In early January 1944 Winter had sent a copy of his notes to Neurath, at Neurath's request. Winter referred to his talk as being on his "impressions of Germany" and "the riddle of the German character", although the paper he enclosed was titled "Notes for a Talk: The Englishman Abroad". The talk was divided into headings: "The Englishman"; "The Foreigner"; 'Home Life" and "Position of Women". Under "The Foreigner" Winter's notes include the following:

> In Germany every provincial town has its municipal theatre with own company, opera house, orchestra, art gallery, academy of music. Puritan tradition in England – suspicion of art and social pleasures.
>
> Englishman at heart a countryman, brings cottage and garden tradition into his towns. Retires to the country, whereas the German retires to some idealised town. Healthy interflow between town and country […].
>
> Large blocks of flats in continental cities compared with the English ideal of "one family, one house" with garden attached. Social significance of this difference. Significance of the open fireplace.[12]

The notes characterize both English and Germans with highly dubious stereotypes, particularly in relation to attitudes of men toward women.[13]

Neurath's letter in return (on the 15th January 1944) thanked Winter very politely but also provided some gentle criticism: he emphasized his own ability to see Germans from the outside since he is Austrian, not German; he emphasized the problems with proceeding from anecdote, or observation of the "puzzling multiplicity of German behaviour", adding "you

[12] Winter to Neurath, January 1944. The Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, Department of Typography and Graphic Design, University of Reading.

[13] In his letter, Winter also refers to another part of the talk, where "I wished to attempt some explanation of the riddle of the German character, based upon the idea of a 'collective neurosis' (Freud und Jung)."

have to proof your case. And that is, as you know, difficult." He also commented, "I am just looking through the literature of the 19th century to find out, how that goes together the freedom of criticism, sometimes free to an unexpected extent, and the obedience and acceptance of militarism etc."[14]

In other words, Neurath himself was trying to find out why the German cultural environment might lend itself to militarism, propaganda, and a culture of obedience.[15] He also seems to lean toward broad-brush generalizations which, though not as crude as Winter's, are still premised on polar oppositions between German and "Anglo" (British) character, though in an attempt to avoid essentializing or personalizing it, Neurath talks in terms of "atmosphere" and "climate". As Günther Sandner has argued,

> The 'German climate' […] was not identical to the national character. For Neurath, not every German was automatically a representative of the 'German climate'. What he wanted to address were specific relations between certain features of German philosophy and literature and the behaviour of people. A human climate represented an ensemble of certain modes of behaviour, statements and articulations. (Sandner 2011, 76.)

Anticipating the issues of the "denazification" of German youth, which he understood not in terms of collective guilt, but in terms of the ideological consequences of Nazi propaganda, Neurath compiled lists or "questionnaires" (though not intended to be used to question people) as a means to collect "descriptive material". These include binary oppositions such as an opposition between the German trust of great leaders, and the British distrust of leaders, or contrasting the tendency of the "German atmosphere" to treat "lack of enthusiasm" as a defect, with the attitude in Britain (where it might even constitute a virtue!).[16] Similarly, he suggested, that to the British "compromise appears humane", while in the German culture "compromise appears bad". The same themes emerge in his correspondence with Carnap:

> It is impressive to listen to plain people here, how they avoid boasting and overstatements in daily matters. I collect "expressions", e.g. fire guard leaders speaking seriously, used e.g. once the term "happiness" explaining how people should get a feeling to be sheltered by the neighbours etc and then explaining, what is needed to act "quickly", to be "calm" and to have the "usual

[14] Neurath to Winter, 15 January 1944. The Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, Department of Typography and Graphic Design, University of Reading.
[15] See Tuboly and Soulez in this volume, and Sandner (2011). Neurath was working on a book project which was never finished, provisionally titled *Tolerance and Persecution*.
[16] Neurath, "Questionnaire (IV)." 202/K.58. ONN. He also published an essay on this topic in *The Journal of Education* (Neurath 1945).

> commonsense". I like this type of habit much more than the continental one, with "highest duty", "national community", "selfsacrifice", "obedience", "subordination", etc "eternal ideals", wherever you give a chance to open the mouth. [17]

For Neurath as for Winter, fireplaces are linked to differences in national tendencies. Despite his own cautions about correlations between behaviors, environments and ideologies, the horrors of Nazism led Neurath to what appear, from a contemporary perspective, as untenable generalizations about cultural difference. In at least one talk he gave, Neurath acknowledged his own feelings, as an Austrian, about German culture:

> I hesitate a little to speak on this subject, for you see, resentment is not a good for scientific deductions and scientific discussions, and as a citizen of one occupied country and a refugee from another occupied country, I have sufficient resentment, but I know from history that sometimes hate and love are not the worst teachers.[18]

He acknowledged that he came from a very different intellectual tradition, which had more in common with English and French philosophy than with the German tradition informed by Kant and Hegel. But in a private letter to Ina Carnap, he also acknowledged a more personal resentment, linking his falling-out with her husband to the latter's Germanic attitude of unyielding principle:

> As you say Carnap is inflicting pain in the name of 'science, impartiality and suchlike gods', that is just, what I try to fight, and what my German friends usually try to defend, whereas my English friends in most cases agree with my attitude, which is based on compromise, muddle, happiness and not on some unhuman 'principles'.[19]

It seems ironic that though he valued what he saw as the British "compromise habit, the not believing in too many arguments,"[20] Neurath was unable to refrain from such arguments in his correspondence with Carnap, despite the fact both were writing in English. There is a stark juxtaposition between their affectionate exchanges of household and personal news, and their strikingly uncompromising, blunt criticisms of one another's work. Perhaps neither man had a great enough grasp of the English language to make use of its many means for "beating

[17] (Neurath to Carnap, 25 September 1943. RC 102-55-03. See letter 22. in the volume.)
[18] Neurath, "Contributing features in the emotional and intellectual isolation of the German." K.48. Otto Neurath Nachlass,, no date.
[19] Neurath to Ina Carnap, 24 September 1945. RC 102-55-13. See letter 35, in the volume.
[20] Neurath to Carnap, 25 September 25 1943. RC 102-55-03. See letter 22 in the volume.

around the bush", or its tendency toward politeness and euphemism. In any case, it seems that compromise and avoidance of argument were qualities Neurath aspired to, not ones that he could enact in his relationship with Carnap.

If Neurath could not separate his attitudes to the "German atmosphere" from his personal resentment and hurt, and his own intellectual distance from the dominant German philosophical tradition, it is also the case that, to some extent at least, Neurath was attempting to analyze German and British "atmospheres" or "climates" in the specific context of a broader discussion of reconstruction and Nazi education in Germany. In common with numerous exiled German-speaking scholars at the time, Neurath wanted to make sense of the culture, physical environment and even "intellectual and emotional environment" in which Nazism had taken root, not simply to form a theory of national difference but to counter the impact of Nazi education on a generation of young Germans.[21]

His notes on the meeting of the Belgium committee on 15th June 1945 reveal that he had argued there that the Nazi view that the war was a historical test, the victor crowned as fit to rule the world, had been challenged by the defeat of Nazism. Indeed, "[t]he war taught the Nazis the lesson that just the Nations with muddle defeated the nation which praised always the over efficiency of army, navy, air force and everything under the sun."[22] The victory of the allies was, in this sense, not a lesson in who was fit to rule the world, but in the potential of co-operation and compromise.

Neurath's diagnosis of the British "atmosphere" of muddle and compromise predates his arrival in Britain. It seems remarkable, but likely, that he addressed these themes in the tennis court lecture while interned in Onchan. Held captive by the British as a response to a xenophobic moral panic, Neurath was still prepared to speak of the British tradition of tolerance and diversity. The notes for the lecture include the following list:

"Tolerance and toleration
Coexistence and interpenetration of different aspirations
Not even unity of the majority"

[21] Neurath's letter to Joyce, 27 November 1944. The Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, Department of Typography and Graphic Design, University of Reading. See also Sandner (2011) and Soulez in the volume.
[22] Neurath, "Meeting, Belgium committee …. chairman Lauwerys, 15th June 1945." K.79, Otto Neurath Nachlass.

Though Neurath was an avowed Anglophile, and given he would also have had to be careful what he said within the context of the internment camp, we should not assume that he was celebrating this tolerance and mutual coexistence as a certain or unassailable fact of wartime Britain. He may well have been holding Britain to its own standards, and perhaps, using the microcosm of the group around the fireplace in the internment camp to help his audience picture that ideal democratic atmosphere. Later, in "International Planning for Freedom" he would argue that not only would a democratic society tolerate the diversity of people but the diversity and contradictions within individuals themselves. He makes the point through a quotation from the Swiss author Conrad Ferdinand Meyer's epic poem *Huttens letzte Tage (Hutten's Last Days)*: "I am not a wittily constructed work of fiction; I am a human being and full of contradiction" (Neurath 1942/1973, 429).

That Neurath was able to talk about tolerance and diversity in a lecture in Onchan Camp might have had something to do with the shift in policy that had happened during his period of internment. In May 1940, when the internment policy was first put in place, the numbers of refugees arriving from Europe each day was increasing. The social survey organization Mass Observation had carried out a survey in April 1940 that suggested that very few people felt that mass internment of refugees was necessary: Tom Harrisson (1940, 36) of Mass Observation wrote "Literally not a single person contacted during the investigation felt that aliens should be interned *en masse*". A policy of classifying "enemy aliens" according to the risk they posed was already in place, but both the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror* had been pressing for extending internment to all "enemy aliens". This pressure came from journalists and editors who only a few years before had expressed pro-Nazi views. Their campaign succeeded in increasing hostility toward Germans, Austrians and (later) to Italians. When Mass Observation repeated their survey in mid-May the press campaigns seem to have had an effect. Harrisson (1940, 36) reported in *The New Statesman* that "many people who a month before were inclined to be tolerant of aliens were now almost pogrom minded".

Yet opposition to the policy came right away, in parliament and in the press, and it was compounded by the torpedoing of the *Arandora Star* in July 1940, a ship which was deporting internees to Canada. While some in parliament and the press attempted to present the drowned victims as Nazi sympathizers, the sinking of the *Arandora Star* affected attitudes towards the internment policy. This change in attitudes may also have been influenced by a book, *The Internment of Aliens* by the twenty-seven year old in François Lafitte, which was published by Penguin books in November 1940. Copies were smuggled into the camps, and although the book did not in itself change internment policy, it was widely read.

Lafitte had been in Vienna in 1934 when the Austrian fascists took over and had contacts among the Viennese left. In Britain, he was active in communist circles. His book mentioned Neurath and Marie Reidemeister, describing Neurath as a "world-famous pioneer of pictorial statistics" who "fled from Vienna in 1934 because he was a Social Democrat" (Lafitte 1940, 80). The book was filled with statistics and surveyed how members of the press and parliament, "individuals who should have known better" who had drummed up xenophobic feeling and the pressure to "intern the lot". He emphasized that the majority of those interned were Jews, and detailed some of the cruel separations caused by the deportation policy, and how non-Nazis were forced together with Nazis in the camps. By the time Lafitte's book was published, tribunals for the possible release of internees were already underway on the Isle of Man, and during 1941 the majority of internees would be released — Neurath and Reidemeister were released in early February.

5. Happiness and Muddle

Neurath's principal opportunity to put his ideas about planning for human happiness into action in England was in his involvement with the redevelopment of the town of Bilston near Wolverhampton, in the West Midlands.[23] This work was fraught with local political difficulties and that it proved extremely stressful for Neurath is evident from his letters. He felt the contradiction between what he was touted in the media as doing – "bringing happiness to Bilston" and the limited room for manoeuvre or influence that he had been given. Neurath died before his work in Bilston was completed, but from his letters we can see that he was trying to put his idea of a nuanced approach to planning into practice – as he wrote "I am looking at all these items from a personal point of view, how a single person in your society may look at it, as a father, as a tired person, as a person who would like to read a book."[24]

In beginning with where people are, what they actually do and enjoy (instead of where they ideally "ought to be") Neurath was being remarkably consistent with one of his earliest writings, "The Converse Taylor System" of 1917, where he argues for an approach to social planning that does not impose structures from above but builds upwards, from the diversity of people "as we find them" (Neurath 1917/1973, 131). He was also distancing

[23] See Nikolow (2004), Henning (2007), Rahman (2014). Sabrina Rahman's text is a short article about an exhibition she co-curated in Bilston, based on her research on Neurath's impact on the redevelopment of Bilston.

[24] Neurath's letter to A.V. Williams, 5 November, 1945. Isotype 1/12-13. In the Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, Department of Typography and Graphic Design, University of Reading.

himself from a certain tradition in German and British thought, which associated planning with moral reform. In 1940s Britain, there was an influential discourse around "problem families", which, as Gillian Swanson (2007, 56-57) has argued, was shaped by the eugenics movement and pathologized "domestic failure" (cf. Henning 2007, 12). Another factor was the longer tradition of "social hygiene" reform that made sexuality and personal life the subject of social planning.

Nevertheless, in Britain, Neurath also found an environment open to debates about empathy and fellow-feeling and about happiness. As Swanson (2013, 141, 135) suggests, there was a significant difference between early twentieth-century British psychological models which emphasized "the cultivation of social feeling […] towards 'human sympathies', feelings of 'fellowship' and universal 'brotherhood'" and other European models which "held group behaviour (and mass culture) in lower regard". Additionally, in the 1930s and '40s, British commentators repeatedly invoked the United States Declaration of Independence in order to argue for the role of government in facilitating the pursuit of happiness. The Liberal MP and author of the 1942 Beveridge Report which paved the way for the post-war welfare state, William Beveridge (1946, 56), wrote that one of the "primary duties" of government was "making possible for all the pursuit of happiness."

For Neurath, this attention to happiness was closely tied to British or English muddle (it is unclear in Neurath's writings whether he conflates Englishness and Britishness). This notion of "muddle" is often mentioned in writings on Neurath, where it tends to be described in terms of the absence of strict regulations. However, the term is more nuanced, as Neurath was aware. "Muddle" can be defined as frustrating, disorganized confusion, and we also have the British English expressions "muddling along" or "muddling through" which means to get by, to make do. It is associated with "botching", with the fix that is just good enough, and with making it up as you go along.

The wartime meanings of muddle were distinctive, and differed from the meanings it had accrued in other variants of English (such as American English). In one nineteenth-century American publication, Richard Soule's 1871 *Dictionary of English Synonyms*, muddle is defined primarily in relation to drunkenness and wastefulness: to "stupefy, fuddle, inebriate" and to "muddle away" was to "waste, misuse, squander". But in 1930s and '40s Britain, one could, quite successfully and tolerably, muddle along through life; muddling along is the opposite to grand ambitions, dreams of ideal society, or organized planning.[25] In

[25] Botching is at the more creative end of muddling along and it is of course not an exclusively British trait: so for example, when the landladies of the Onchan boarding houses finally got their homes back they discovered

this period, it also had a specific meaning linked to British identity and politics, which was to do with the absence of ideology, of policy and of economic planning. It was understood as a positive national characteristic, almost a virtue, at times. The term was used in both British and American contexts to characterize wartime Britain.[26]

Neurath connected British "muddle" to its origins in an old country. Germany, by contrast was a new country and "[w]hen people have no long tradition in civilization and no established type of living, what do they do? They make rules."[27] He perhaps overstated his admiration for English muddle to his British correspondents, sensitive to the political climate in wartime and also possibly the censor. Nevertheless, and whether or not it was actually true that the English were not rule-bound and "do not fear differences" (a position that overlooks the bureaucratic and racist nature of the British Empire), he wanted to make the point that "[t]he muddle is related to democracy" (ibid.). In a letter to Ina Carnap he also directly related it to happiness: "when thinking of human happiness one has to bear muddle, which is also essential for any evolved democracy."[28]

Given his lifelong commitment to social planning, Neurath's feelings on this score were also, and understandably, quite mixed. On the one hand he recognized in "muddle" a quality that might be necessary for preventing any kind of cultural hospitality toward Nazism, on the other hand he wanted to see botching and making do as merely a rational response to imperfect design, and therefore something that can be designed – or planned – out. I gave an example of this in an essay I wrote some years ago about Neurath's visit to Bilston (Henning 2007, 11-12). The town clerk of Bilston, A.V. Williams wrote that the town councilors were worried that slum-dwellers moved into new modern houses would simply turn those houses into slums by putting coal in the bath. Against this, Neurath "stressed most emphatically that people only put coals in the bathtub for some very good reason" such as inadequate fuel storage places, or expensive hot water systems (Williams 1973, 76). He went on to mention that he knew a man in Vienna who kept a pig in his bath. Putting coal (or pigs) in the bath is a way of muddling along, that demonstrates (rather than undermines) Neurath's faith in human ingenuity, rationality and creativity. However, with a proper heating system or fuel storage, Neurath imagined that the muddle, or botch, would no longer be necessary.

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that the men had knocked doors through to get from one house in a terrace to another, had filled attics with soil to grow mushrooms, and had blocked the drains with radio parts, from the home-made radios they had cobbled together.

[26] See for example: "We Americans, younger in form of self-government by many years than the English, can learn something from the manner in which the English "muddle" through adversity" (Mundt 1941).

[27] Neurath, "Contributing features in the emotional and intellectual isolation of the German." K.48, Otto Neurath Nachlass..

[28] Neurath to Ina Carnap, 24 September 1945. RC 102-55-13. See letter 35. in the volume.

Even so, Neurath's sensitivity to human feeling and the tendency to love what is not necessarily efficient or functional, is much greater than that of most commentators of the period, and despite his largely positive representation of Englishness, he was critical of certain practices of social planning and intervention in England. One famous and influential example is the Peckham Experiment which was initiated in 1925, and then rolled out in full from 1935-1939. The Peckham Experiment had set out to explore the impact of the environment on children's health and development through direct social intervention, by establishing a social club with health and leisure facilities, called the Pioneer Health Centre, in Peckham, South London. As Ben Highmore explains:

> For a smallish membership fee families could belong to the health centre and make daily use of its facilities, which included: a swimming pool, a gymnasium, crèche facilities, snooker, darts and table tennis, a cafeteria, covered play areas, a room for dances, a theatre (for acting rather than surgically operating), badminton court, and so on. As well as using it for all forms of socialising and play, families could undertake regular 'health overhauls.' (2006, 74-75.)

Actually, these "health overhauls", central to the "experiment", were compulsory conditions of membership. They were not conceived as medical appointments (since the consultants were biologists, and the participants had not identified themselves as ill), but as opportunities to test and record the health of the families and to intervene pedagogically in practices of parenting, family planning and self-help. As Highmore (2006, 74) describes it, the Pioneer Health Centre was a modernist project "dedicated to the study and production of health." Yet it was also informed by the eugenics debates mentioned earlier. According to Innes Pearse, one of its founders, the health center was designed on principles of surveillance:

> " It was […] necessary that the observers should be able to note the effect of the new environment upon family action. Hence the building was planned for visibility and free circulation throughout […]. Everything was visible. One object of this provision was to test the hypothesis we had laid down, namely that the sight of action was a natural stimulus to action […]. (Pearse 1945, 48-55.)

Although Neurath may have approved of the use of "exuberant social practices and learning through play" (Highmore 2006) at the health center, he was concerned by and wished to distance himself from the experimental emphasis, which made participants the objects of study. In a letter to R.C. Kirk of the department of Zoology at Birmingham, Neurath wrote: "please do not speak of 'experiment", it is the very life of people at stake. I dislike the

speaking of the Peckham experiment, it is more than that, because the life of families is altered and one cannot repeat the action […] and using some people as experimental material for other people is against my feelings […]."[29]

XY. 6. Chairs, Shoes and Functionalism

Even so, Neurath's modernist attention to the mundane aspects of British life was in some ways consistent with the approach in Peckham, and with the statistical, survey-based work of British organizations such as Mass Observation and Le Play House (Neurath was familiar with both).[30] His concern with ordinary objects was also consistent with the 1920s *neue Sachlichkeit* interest in everyday things.[31] For him, these mundane things play three roles: they are a means of exploring and exemplifying the task of sociology and social theory, and what logical empiricism is capable of; they enable him to debate the nature of functionalism in design, debates begun in the 1920s in his interaction with the Bauhaus and with modern architecture in Austria and Germany; and third, they are the material of Isotype charts – the stuff out of which data can be produced, ways of life described and analyzed.[32] This last use is also mentioned in the Carnap correspondence:

> I should highly appreciate it if you were kind enough to send interesting newspaper cuttings and reprints and such stuff. We have now a nice studio again, with many files full of interesting material, but it is not our old richness, which was evolved in years. We like very much statistical data, interesting pictures of single objects, e.g. certain characteristic animals, busses, chairs, teapots, coffeepots etc, lists of knifes and forks, cups and pots, plates etc refrigerators etc. We are buying LIFE, LOOK etc for catching such material. Today we found in this way the shape of an American telephone apparatus, but there are thousands of apparatus, you know. (Neurath to Carnap, 17 July 1942. RC 102-56-04. See letter 11. in the volume.)

This attention to objects for the purposes of Isotype is not at all trivial. In this period, Isotype is becoming increasingly international and so the Isotype Institute had to take into account the recognizability and meaning of the pictograms in different cultural contexts. Since the

[29] Neurath's letter to R.C.Kirk, 7November 1945. The Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, Department of Typography and Graphic Design, University of Reading.
[30] His and Marie Neurath's correspondence includes letters to and from Dorothea Farquharson of the Institute of Sociology at Le Play House, in The Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, Department of Typography and Graphic Design, University of Reading. A 1943 letter to Josef Frank states "I just looked through the Mass Observation book on housing and so many common sense remarks from plain people". Neurath to Frank, 28 September 1943, Osterreichische Nationalbibliotek 1230/43.
[31] Neurath's relationship to the *neue Sachlichkeit* is discussed in Dahms (2004) and Damböck (2017).
[32] Isotype is discussed by Angélique Groß and Sophie Hochhäusl in this volume. See also Twyman (1975), Burke, Kindel, and Walker (2013) and Henning (2010).

beginning of the Vienna Method in the 1920s, close attention had been paid by Neurath, and by the chief artist in Vienna, Gerd Arntz, to the specific choice and design of symbols that had to fulfill criteria of recognizability and repeatability, since, as Christopher Burke puts it, "[i]t was necessary that these signs be suitable for repetition in sequence along a line, to indicate statistical quantity; this differentiates Isotype pictograms from their successors in public signing" (Burke et al. 2013, 501-502). At the *Gesellschafts-und Wirtschaftsmuseum* they put together a systematic card index or "picture dictionary" of Arntz's designs, but without Arntz in Britain, with limited access to their old files, and with the changing shape of designed technical objects, there was a continuous need to update old pictograms and develop new ones.

Through Isotype and in his writings and lectures, Neurath began to plot a correlation between the design and uses of everyday objects and forms of sociability, as part of his attempt to arrive at a more complex, pluralist functionalism – understood from the ground up, that is, from the empirical basis of everyday experience.

This is best demonstrated via the example of chairs. Tennis courts and fireplaces endure: the tennis courts because of the necessity for play even in the most constrained circumstances, and fireplaces because of British obstinacy, and the inadequacy of efficiency calculations (or calorie counting). Yet chairs are amongst the objects most easily and frequently reinvented in modernism. The centrality of the chair in modernist design is remarkable and linked to the fact that chairs are most evidently a means to shape people by positioning their bodies. Chairs are anthropomorphic: literally taking on the shape of people, but also becoming person-like. In the 1935 essay "Art as Experience" the Bauhaus teacher Josef Albers (1935, 391-392) wrote: "We should try to see a chair as a living creature […] as an apparatus willing to hold us, to carry, to surround or embrace us." Adolf Loos (1998, 65), another Viennese observer of English muddle noted: "following the principle that every type of tiredness requires a different chair, an English room is never furnished with one type of seat alone." Loos neglected the fact that being tired is not the only precondition for sitting. In England at least, fireplaces and chairs were intimately connected – you pulled up a chair to the fireside.

Similarly in one of his draft questionnaires, mentioned earlier, Neurath wrote about the German attitude that the house and furniture are not "indifferent places of happy living, adapted to people of various inclinations and tastes", and he contrasted this to "the Anglo-Saxon atmosphere [which] supports the attitude that house and furniture should remain relatively indifferent, not presenting any 'expression' of a certain person (father, mother or

some architect) , but to be a centre for different persons, therefore mixing up various kinds of seats, tables, etc."[33]

Neurath decorated one letter to J.K. Hunt, a member of the Ministry of Production committee, with a little cartoon captioned "The higher the seat, the lower the salary."[34] This wry joke point to another aspect of British seating arrangements that Loos overlooked: their function in maintaining forms of social distinction. Changing the seating arrangements, moving the chairs around, may be easier and more predictable in its impact than changing something as durable as the fireplace but as with fireplaces, chairs have functions that go beyond their obvious use and beyond the purely symbolic. They facilitate interaction, they allow for certain kinds of discussion and they shape social behavior. In Neurath's view, to understand how they do this would be a task for a careful and nuanced empirical sociology.

For Neurath, the cultural and symbolic role of designed objects was as important as their social function even if one could not be extrapolated from the other. Shoes, for instance, have the ability to shape ways of being in the world – how we stand, run, walk. On the 19th March 1944, Neurath wrote to the British photographer John Hinde who he had met through the book-packaging firm Adprint, with some thoughts about a possible Isotype chart on shoes. During the war Hinde was mostly employed doing highly-staged, well-crafted, wartime propaganda photographs in full color. He was also working on a book project with Neurath, based around a Mass Observation study of the village of Luccombe, on Exmoor (the project was eventually published as *An Exmoor Village* by George G. Harrap and co. ltd. 1947). However, Neurath may have known that Hinde had also produced shoe advertisements for the company Clarks. Indeed, he was grandson of the company founder,James Clark, and lived in a village near Clarks' Somerset factory.

In his letter, Neurath offered plenty of suggestions for ways of researching shoes. Although it is unclear whether this is with reference to the Exmoor Village project or a different project, the letter demonstrates that the Isotype Institute was much more than a design organization that produced statistical charts and diagrams, and that it was involved in initiating and commissioning social research. Neurath wanted to know what kind of shoes people wore in "this part of the country", and suggested some ways of classifying them according to use: did people go barefoot at all, did they wear shoes and stockings, did they wear specific shoes for specific occupations or for "festivals, dancing, church, etc. or

[33] Neurath, "Questionnaire (IV)." 202/K.58. Otto Neurath Nachlass...
[34] Neurath's letter to Mr J.K. Hunt, 18 September 1943. The Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, Department of Typography and Graphic Design, University of Reading.

everyday life". He also wants to pay attention to the differences between shoes, between boys and girls, men and women, fashionable and old-fashioned people. Additionally, he asked Hinde for some comparative data: "with the next town, with other countrysides, with London etc". He wanted details of heels, color, the materials the shoes were made of and of the extent to which shoes were repaired, or damaged shoes still worn. He even wondered what "names and expressions" were used to describe shoes. Neurath acknowledged that nothing might come of these questions: "Perhaps the result will not be very stimulating and only used in the text, perhaps something comes out worthwhile for 'Isotypizing' it."[35]

This is possibly not the first time Neurath has thought about shoes in relation to everyday experience. At the *Gesellschafts-und Wirtschaftsmuseum*, the museum in Vienna that Neurath opened in 1925, the staff photographer took a number of photographs that seem to attend to feet and footwear. The explicit content of these photographs is work, specifically factory labor, but the images draw our attention to the male and female workers' shoes. This is to do with the fact that the machinery they were using was partly foot-operated, but also the photographer would have been aware that shoes were an indicator of wealth or deprivation, and of types of labor (the workman's steel boot, the woman worker's comfortable slipper and swollen ankle indicating long periods spent standing, the fashionable Mary-Janes of the younger women). Among the *Gesellschafts-und Wirtschaftsmuseum*'s collections of photographs of the new state kindergartens, part of the social housing built by the socialist municipal government, are images of children tying their shoes. Such images have an obvious significance, indicating the growing prosperity of child and city as well as the development of independence through the civic kindergarten education.

In 1941, Neurath had used shoes as another example in his Cambridge lecture of 1941 and possibly in the Tennis Court lecture too. As I suggested near the beginning of this chapter, he used the example of a tailcoat and riding boots to show how style is not purely functional ("where is the horse?"), but nor is it an unconscious expression. His example is a dancer in tailcoat and low shoes:

> He has very low shoes, very nice low shoes and he has also perhaps tails. What is that for a strange combination? The low shoes are shoes of the Red Indians and of other people who are running on plains and the tails are horseman's clothes. So I imagine […] somebody might write 'I see the comprehensive modern man in his feeling combine all types of human life: on horseback subconsciously in the tails and running on the plains subconsciously in his shoes. (Neurath 1941.)

[35] Neurath's letter to John Hinde, 19 March 1944. The Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, Department of Typography and Graphic Design, University of Reading.

Neurath argues there are "dozens and dozens of books, seriously written of such a type". He could be referencing any number of Spengler-influenced texts, but there is also an evident connection with the art historian Heinrich Wölfflin. In his dissertation (published in 1886) Wölfflin had argued that the Gothic shoe expressed the very same "historical state" of the human will or mind as the Gothic cathedral did. The three-pointed style, he argued, developed in contradiction to the demands of function and materials in order to express the Gothic spirit. Wölfflin claimed that "we feel forms by analogy to our bodies and forms are created as the unconscious expression of the corporeal feeling of an age". The closeness of shoes to the body connects body and spirit, or *Geist*.[36]

Whether Neurath was aware of Wölfflin's discussion of the Gothic shoe, it is unclear, but he certainly uses the example of shoes to demonstrate how culture and custom cannot be explained solely with reference to function nor with reference to "unconscious expression." Shoes, like fireplaces, are meaningful objects – and it is from such everyday, basic objects that we can learn lessons both for planning and design and for sociological study. These lessons are to do with the difficulties of disentangling overt symbolism and actual use, efficiency and meaning, of establishing causality and of the risk in making uninformed, under-researched changes to the everyday environment. Through these objects, and the everyday "muddling along" that they represent, Neurath was refining his politics of design and of decentralized planning.

Even in the 1940s, Neurath still wrote of the need to avoid dangerous, imprecise terms, and he bemoaned the difficulty people have in letting go of imprecise terms. Yet as a number of Neurath experts have explained (notably Cartwright et al. 1996) he also recognized that ordinary language was necessarily formed of *Ballungen* – imprecise clusters of concepts. Cartwright, Cat, Fleck and Uebel (1996) also link "muddle" (as a specifically English quality) to Neurath's opposition to over-centralized planning. The present essay has attempted to show how Neurath's interest in muddle in the 1940s was accompanied by an increasingly thoughtful attention to the everyday objects through which daily life was made bearable, comfortable and pleasurable. These would form the basis of an approach to planning in which human happiness, not moral improvement, was the core value.

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[36] Wölfflin cited in Schwarz 2005, 5-6. See Schwarz (2005,4) for a discussion of Wölfflin's writing on the Gothic shoe.

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